

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T CAIRO 11703

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG PFOR EG IS US

SUBJ: ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO IN GULF OF SUEZ

REF: CAIRO 11702

1. I SAW FAHMY HALF HOUR AGO. HE WAS CALM, BUT INSISTENT THAT MARINER SHOULD NOT RPT NOT LEAVE SITE DESPITE ISRAELI ULTIMATUM. SITE IS IN RAMADAN FIELD, WHICH IS EGYPTIAN. AMOCO WAS GRANTED CONCESSION BY GOE, WHICH NOW EXPECTS COMPANY TO FULFILL ITS OBLIGATIONS. HE CONFIRMED GAMASY HAD SENT EGYPTIAN GUNBOATS TO SITE TO PROVIDE PROTECTION. WHEN I MENTIONED AMOCO'S DESIRE TAKE CREW OFF MARINER, FAHMY STRONGLY OBJECTED. THIS WOULD BE PLAYING INTO ISRAELI HANDS. HE POINTED OUT NOT ONLY AMERICANS ARE ABOARD SHIP, BUT ALSO EGYPTIANS. ISRAELIS ARE BLUFFING AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO GET AWAY WITH IT. FAHMY ALSO KNEW THAT I AM MEETING WITH GAMASY TOMORROW AND TOLD ME GAMASY WILL WANT TO DISCUSS THE INCIDENT WITH ME.

2. MEANWHILE, EMBOFF MET WITH CRAIG AND SANTA FE MANAGER BARKER. BARKER INFORMED HIM THERE ARE SIXTY-EIGHT CREW MEMBERS ABOARD MARINER, FORTY-EIGHT OF THEM EGYPTIAN AND TWENTY OTHER NATIONALS. BARKER BELIEVES OF THIS LAST NUMBER, ABOUT FIFTEEN MAY BE AMERICANS.

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3. ACCORDING BOTH CRAIG AND BARKER, COMMUNICATIONS ARE BAD AND THEY HAVE NO DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS WITH MARINER. INSTEAD, THEY HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATING WITH ANOTHER AMOCO DRILLING RIG IN RAMADHAN FIELD, WHICH IN TURN RELAYS MESSAGES TO MARINER. THEY HAVE HAD NO DIRECT WORD FROM MARINER. BEFORE LEAVING, SKIPPER HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED THAT, IF ISRAELIS ORDERED RIG OUT, HE WAS TO FILE FORMAL PROTEST INDICATING MARINER CONDUCTING LEGAL OPERATIONS, BUT THEN LEAVE. NEITHER CRAIG NOR BARKER KNOW EXACTLY WHAT MARINER SKIPPER IS DOING OR CONTEMPLATES. THE RIG IS UNDER SANTA FE CONTROL. BARKER DID HAVE A MESSAGE, RELAYED THROUGH ANOTHER RIG, THAT CREW AGITATED AND WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE.

4. CRAIG IS TRYING TO SEND WILKIE, GENERAL MANAGER OF GUPCO (JOINT EGYPTIAN/AMOCO OPERATING COMPANY), TO RAS SHUKAIR TONIGHT BY SPECIAL AMOCO AIRCRAFT TO TAKE CHARGE ON THE GROUND. HE DOES NOT KNOW IF GOE WILL GIVE PERMISSION FOR NIGHT-TIME FLIGHT TO RAS SHUKAIR.

5. SINCE WRITING ABOVE (1000 LOCAL), CRAIG SENT WORD THROUGH EMBOFF THAT A MESSAGE HAD JUST BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE MARINER. MARINER'S RADAR HAD PICKED UP WHAT IT BELIEVES TO BE FIVE ISRAELI GUNBOATS STANDING BY ABOUT TWO MILES EAST OF RIG'S POSITION. ABOUT AN HOUR AGO, THEY TURNED ON THEIR LIGHTS BRIEFLY TO SHOW MARINER THEY WERE THERE. SANTA FE MANAGER HAS INSTRUCTED FORMAN ABOARD MARINER THAT HE MUST DECIDE WHETHER CREW STAYS ABOARD OR LEAVES. AS INDICATED EARLIER, TWO WORKBOATS ARE NEARBY AND CRAIG INFORMS THAT A THIRD, NOW IN THE RAMADHAN FIELD, IS PROCEEDING TO THE MARINER. GIVEN AGITATION OF CREW, CRAIG EXPECTS THAT CREW WILL PROBABLY LEAVE IN NEXT COUPLE OF HOURS.

6. CRAIG UNDERTOOK BE IN TOUCH WITH ME, OR IF HE CANNOT GET THROUGH FROM MAADI BY PHONE, WITH EMBOFF TO ADVISE US OF ANY DEVELOPMENTS. CRAIG AGAIN INDICATED THAT EVEN IF CREW LEAVES, MARINER CANNOT POSSIBLY WEIGH ANCHOR IN THE PERIOD STIPULATED BY THE ISRAELIS. HE IS STILL TRYING TO CONTACT HILAL IN HOPES OF PERSUADING HIM THAT
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MARINER MIGHT LEAVE, BUT IS NOT HOPEFUL THAT MINPET WILL AGREE.
EILTS

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